

NSC BRIEFING

5 October 1954

CHINESE OFFSHORE ISLANDS

I. Although shelling of Quemoy's less than 100 rounds per day since 22 September, Communist artillery reportedly being relocated and resupplied and heavy shelling may be resumed at any time.

A. One tank sighted on mainland,

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"very large" tanks moving through Foochow toward Amoy in mid-September.

B. Possible use of Communist air at Quemoy--unconfirmed--is questionable report of Nationalist plane attacked by fighter on 2 October.

C. Quemoy commander reports--
unconfirmed--Communist troops
concentrating in Amoy area, use
of 20 motorized junks in landing
exercises.

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D.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] both

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loudspeakers near the Quemoy
and Communist radio have announced
islands will be in Communist hands
by 15 October.

E. As result these developments,
Nationalist Defense Ministry and
MAAG observers believe assault
on some of Quemoy a "distinct
possibility" at any time.

II. Nationalists have reinforced Quemoy
garrison. Arrival 60 light tanks
2 October brings total to 98, plus
12 75mm assault guns.

A. Quemoy garrison now some 53,500
regulars, plus some 1,350
guerrillas. Nationalist artillery
totals: 52 75mm howitzers
(4 battalions plus); 77 105mm
howitzers (6 battalions plus);
5 155mm guns (1 battery plus);
12 155mm howitzers (1 battalion)
and 12 40mm AA guns (2 batteries).

III. Near the Matsus, Communist activity
continues. On 27 September, 1,000
junks and two larger vessels were
spotted opposite the islands.

A. This large shipping concentration
very probably explained by run
of "yellow fish"--a Chinese
delicacy--in coastal waters.

B. On 29 Sept 200 of these junks
approached Matsus but withdrew

when Nationalists fired two shells.

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Incident apparently source of
Formosa press claim that Communist
"invasion" was repelled.

C. Just such fishing, however, could
provide natural cover for surprise
assault on Matsus: so long as junks
concentrated, threat remains.

D. Matsu commander has reported several
"unidentified" aircraft recently.
Perhaps Communist, although
commander complains he gets no
information on Nationalist air
operations and planes might
equally well be Nationalist.

IV. Matsu garrison (3,000 regulars, perhaps
2,400 guerrillas) is alert to possibility
of attack.

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A. However, [redacted]
fortifications scanty and defense
plans "not impressive."

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V. Communist activity in Tachen area is marked by increasing air patrols along coast from Ningpo and over islands.

A. Both MIG 15 jets and LA-11 piston fighters used; have made several flights over islands. Seldom attack ground targets, but have strafed Nationalist naval vessels in harbor.

B. Increasing activity due largely to weakness Nationalist AA and to fact that Formosa-based fighters seldom challenge.

C. [redacted] move of new jet fighter division from Yalu to Nanking-Shanghai area, probably in early September. If correct, MIG strength in the Shanghai complex (within range of the Tachens) would rise from 220 to 270.

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[REDACTED] says

many Communist naval vessels now concentrating in Choushans, one of chief Communist naval bases. Attack on Tachens would probably come either from Choushans, where the Chinese Communist 22nd Army (50,000 troops) is located: or from Haimen, where 20th Army located and shipping concentration reported fortnight ago.

E. [REDACTED]

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Yangtze estuary closed to non-military shipping and, on 30 Sept., patrolled by Soviet vessels. [REDACTED]

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VI. Nationalist opinion divided on relative threat to different islands.

- A. Tachen garrison commander reportedly believes Communists will not attack his position at this time; considers a full-scale attack on Quemoy more likely.
- B. This view not shared by Chiang Ching-kuo, who believes attack on Tachens more likely than assault on Quemoy.
- C. In view Communist coastal strength, none of islands appear safe from attack; all could conceivably be assaulted simultaneously.
- D. "Cheapest" operation would be against Matsus. Capture of Quemoy would be costliest venture, but highest in prestige value. "Liquidation" of Tachens probably represents middle balance between cost and prestige.

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AMOY CAUSEWAY

I. A correction

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[redacted] completion of
causeway linking island of Amoy with
mainland, study [redacted]
shows 90-foot gap at Amoy end.

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A. Incomplete causeway does not
prevent Communist attack on
Quemoys, however. Sufficient
shipping is available to ferry
supplies for assault forces on
the island, or such forces could
be assembled in other nearby
areas.

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